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## 'Completely wrong': Anger over COVID-19 vaccine second dose delay for seniors



By **Saba Aziz** • Global News

Posted May 7, 2021 10:14 am ▼

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WATCH: Should seniors and immunocompromised people get a second COVID-19 dose sooner? – Mar 24, 2021



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An Alberta senior is extremely concerned about the four-month gap between [COVID-19](#) vaccine doses, appealing to the Canadian government to expedite her case.

Gladys Saca, 80, got the first dose of the [Pfizer](#) vaccine at her local pharmacy in Edmonton on Monday and was told to come back for the second one in fourth months' time.

**READ MORE:** [COVID-19 vaccine — Second dose delay 'more risky' for seniors, experts warn](#)

This is in line with the recommendation from the [National Advisory Committee on Immunization](#) (NACI) but deviates from the originally mandated span of three weeks specified by Pfizer.

"This is completely wrong," Saca told Global News.

"If we don't have a second dose, we are exposed.

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"I wanted to have a little bit more protection It's very frustrating" Saca said

I wanted to have a little bit more protection.... It's very frustrating," Sade said, adding that keeping a distance from her children and grandchildren over the last year due to fear of infection has taken a mental toll on her.

[NACI's guidelines](#), which were updated on March 3 to take into consideration limited vaccine supplies, have been questioned by several experts, who argue that there is a risk in this approach.

According to NACI, which makes recommendations for the use of vaccines approved by [Health Canada](#), extending the interval between vaccine doses "maximizes vaccine supply to immunize the largest number of people as quickly as possible".

**4:18**

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But critics say that the elderly as well as immunocompromised individuals, who have a weaker immune response, [should be exempted from this rule](#).

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In a previous interview with Global News, Jorgan Fritz, an immunologist at McGill University, said the first dose wanes much faster compared to the two doses.

**READ MORE:** [Senior Canadian scientists question government plans to delay 2nd dose of COVID-19 vaccine](#)

The waning is “clearly high” in the elderly and immunosuppressed individuals, he said.

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“Older people... have the weakest immune systems amongst us and COVID-19 preys on that,” said Samir Sinha, director of geriatrics at Sinai Health and University Health Network hospitals in Toronto.

“This one-size-fits-all approach to delaying the second dose of the vaccine by up to 16 weeks may not be right for everyone,” he told Global News in a previous interview.

The concerns stem from [growing data](#) coming out of the United Kingdom – where both the Pfizer and AstraZeneca vaccines are being given 12 weeks

apart – that suggests that the second dose is crucial to get the full benefit of the vaccine for the elderly population.

**0:44**

### **NACI suggests interval between vaccine doses could e...**

NACI suggests interval between vaccine doses could eventually be shortened to 2 months – Apr 7, 2021

Shelly Deeks, vice-chair of NACI, said Monday that the committee was continuing to look at data on vaccine effectiveness, but added that currently, they did not have information specifically about how effective two doses of the vaccine were for people with immunodeficiency or those suffering from cancer.

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“Certain jurisdictions have to make some modifications and changes in their policy and are giving certain groups earlier second doses,” Deeks said during a May 3 news conference.

“But those policy decisions are really resting with the provinces and territories.”

Last month, [Alberta announced a change to the second dose schedules](#) for Albertans undergoing specific kinds of cancer treatments or who are on medication that results in a level of “profound immune compromise.”

As of April 22, cancer patients receiving active treatment, such as chemotherapy, are able to book their second dose appointments 21 to 28 days after their first dose.

**2:18**

### **Alberta changes timeline for second COVID-19 vaccine...**

Alberta changes timeline for second COVID-19 vaccine dose for certain immunocompromised patients – Apr 22, 2021

Canada’s chief public health officer Theresa Tam said the 16-week interval can be shortened as more vaccines become available and old age should be a priority.

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“Two doses are important to complete the vaccine series,” she said during a news conference on Friday.

“So you have to be able to have enough vaccines and prioritize the second dose for people who have already received the first dose.”

Saca said she intends to plead her case by writing to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau’s office, Health Minister Patty Hajdu and Alberta’s Health Minister Tyler Shandro.

— *With files from Global News’ Julia Wong*

## Canadian cases

CONFIRMED

**1,468,357**

(today: +639)

DEATHS

**26,792**

(today: +0)

AT LEAST ONE DOSE

**82.67%**

of Canadians aged 12+

FULLY VACCINATED

**74.02%**

of Canadians aged 12+

Source: Esri Canada

Check out our [Coronavirus Tracker](#) for more details and maps

Last Updated: August 23, 2021, at 11:00:00 am EST

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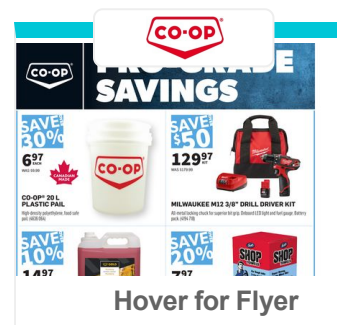
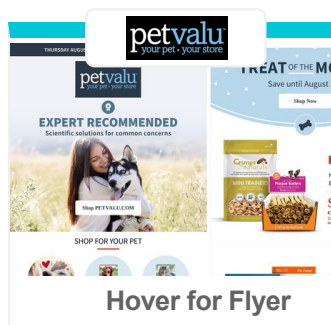
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